



The Hawaii State Legislature's
PUBLIC ACCESS ROOM

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Testimony - Some Helpful Hints and Guidelines

Here are some tips and guidelines that you can follow to help make your testimony as effective as possible. First thing you're going to need is some knowledge about the subject. Inform yourself; become an expert; know the issue well enough to be able to answer questions, and know it well enough to be able to rebut any contentious remarks by your opposition. Remember that the legislators use hearings to gain information to help them decide on the fate of a measure. By making yourself an expert and by being well informed, you become a valuable information resource with the ability to sway votes.

The next step is to start formulating your thoughts on a specific measure that applies to your idea. Since you've already got a wealth of knowledge on the subject, it should be no problem distilling your points onto a single page. Keep in mind that committees can receive hundreds of pieces of testimony on a single measure and with the thousands of bills that get introduced in a year, legislators may not have the time to pore over a 5-page piece of testimony. Your best bet is to carefully hone a handful of points that back-up your position on a bill so your strongest points get addressed by the committee. Remember, you always have the opportunity to expand on your ideas when you give oral testimony.

The most *ineffective* testimony is to submit something that simply states your opinion without the reasoning behind your opinion: "I am against this measure. I urge the committee to vote 'NO' on SB1234". If you only want to state your opinion on an issue, call your legislator or call the committee chair that is hearing your measure and let him or her know. Most Legislators' offices keep tally sheets of voter's opposition or support on a measure.

Legislative Timetable

January

16th Opening Day.

22nd State-of-the-State Address.

24th One day recess.

25th Last day for introduction of bills.

February

15th First Lateral (House).

21st -27th Mandatory 5 day recess.

March

1st Filing deadline for First Decking.

4th One day recess

6th One day recess.

7th First Crossover.

13th Last day to intro substantive resolutions.

22nd Second Lateral.

April

5th Filing deadline for Second Decking.

8th One day recess.

10th One day recess.

11th Second Crossover.

Last day to Disagree.

16th One day recess.

18th Deadline for final form of constitutional amendments.

22nd Second Crossover for concurrent resolutions.

25th Last day to file non-fiscal bills to deck for Final Reading.

26th Last day to file fiscal bills to deck for Final Reading.

29th One day recess.

May

1st One day recess.

2nd Adjournment Sine Die.

Citizen's Guide

The 2002 edition of the *Citizen's Guide to Participation in the Legislative Process* is now available for you to pick up from the office of your Senator or Representative. Aside from being an informative reference detailing the legislative process, the *Guide* also provides tips and samples on testimony, contact information for each legislator, and more. Get yours today!

EMAIL TESTIMONY

Given the overwhelming interest & participation in our testimony email submission process*, we have worked to increase capacity of our email account and established protocol for the most expedient distribution of your testimony. We ask that people follow a few guidelines when submitting testimony via email. It will make our jobs a little easier and hopefully give you more insight into the legislative process.

**The Public Access Room received roughly 480 pieces of testimony last year, compared to nearly 800 thus far in the session (and we have yet to hit First Crossover).*

- **HEARING NOTICES** – Include the TIME & DATE, ROOM #, COMMITTEE and Instructions for Testimony submittal. To find this information, you'll need to examine the Hearing Notice. The details for the hearing itself are located at the top of the Notice, and instructions for testimony submittal (i.e. # of copies and room to deliver to, which is different from the conference room) are located at the bottom of the notice, just above the Committee Chair's signature.

- **24 HOURS** – Be sure to submit your testimony at least 24 hours in advance of the hearing (standard protocol for submitting testimony). This gives the committee clerks time to process your testimony and gives time to the committee members to read and assimilate your testimony. Twenty-four hours means that you should send testimony during business hours the day before the hearing, not including Sundays.

- **ONE DISTRIBUTION POINT ONLY** – There are four distribution points available for remote-access testimony submittal. The House Sgt- at-Arms Fax (586-6501), the Senate Sgt- at-Arms Fax (586-6659), the Public Access Room Fax (587-0793) and, of course, via email (testimony@capitol.hawaii.gov). Be sure that you *only submit your testimony to one of these outlets*. This eliminates wasted hours and unnecessary duplication, and saves the committee clerks the trouble of reading & processing multiple pieces of testimony.

- **GRASSROOTS & NETWORKING** – If you choose to mobilize a grassroots effort to submit testimony from numerous individuals, please make sure that everyone tries to follow these guidelines. Be sure to notify everyone when the hearing is over to ensure they do not continue to send testimony after the hearing has taken place. This eliminates the need to process testimony that is not going to be addressed by the committee.

- **FORM LETTERS** – Please do not use form letters when submitting testimony. The Legislature tries to discourage their use because they offer no further information for the legislators to help them make a decision. It may be more effective to attach a petition to an articulate, well thought-out piece of testimony.

- **ATTACHMENTS** – If you are going to use attachments for your email testimony, please use the following program files: MS Word, PDF's, or Text Documents (Rich & Standard). If we are unable to open your attachment, we will send you an email reply asking that you insert your testimony within the text of the email itself.

- **REMEMBER, THIS IS TESTIMONY** – Do not use testimony only as a way to vent your opinions; this should not be a typical email to a friend. This is *testimony* - you should try to be as respectful and as professional as possible. Eliminate grammatical errors and misspellings, and always address your testimony to the Chair of the committee that is hearing your measure.

Opening Day Festivities



Bob Jones helps some patrons on Opening Day



Capsun Poe get lei'd from a very special person

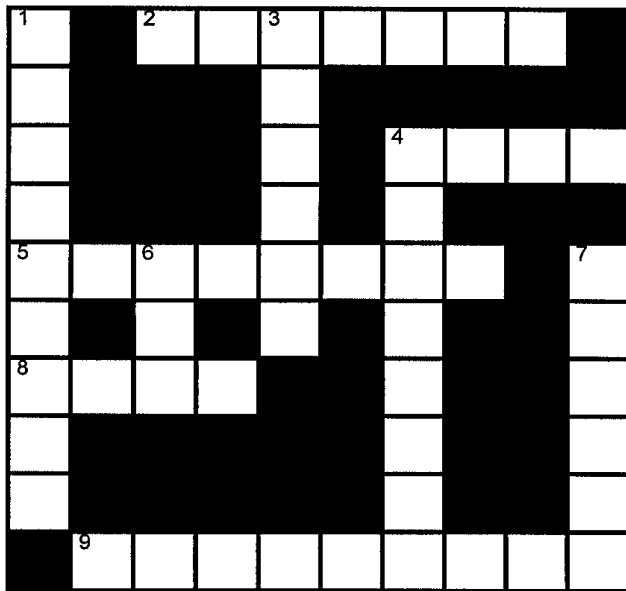


Shane Peters gets interviewed for an 'Olelo program



Suzanne Marinelli serves up some punch for the guests

CROSSWORD

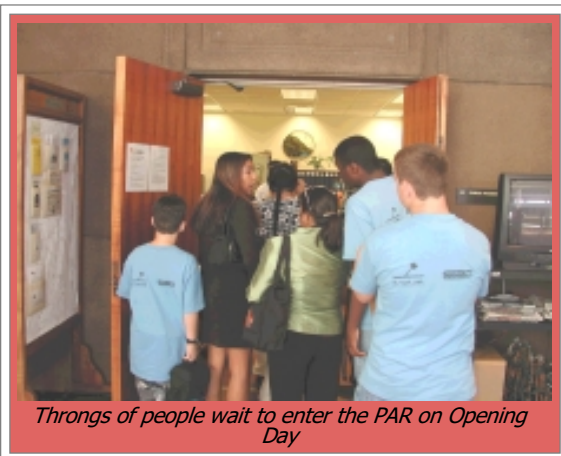


ACROSS

2. When a bill is in the final form in which it is intended to be passed and made available to the Legislature.
4. A measure that can add, amend or delete a law; propose amendments to the State Constitution; or appropriate funds for a new or existing program.
5. Hawaii's codified body of law.
8. A power vested in the Governor to prevent the enactment of measures passed by the Legislature.
9. A formal modification, addition, or deletion to a bill.

DOWN

1. The process by which a bill switches chambers for consideration.
3. Group of members of a legislative body that meet to discuss policies or strategies for a given issue or constituency.
4. A two-year period.
6. A bill that has become law.
7. Estimate of proposed governmental expenditures, and the proposed means of financing those expenditures.



How to find a hearing notice on a specific measure through the internet.

1. Begin at the Hawaii State Legislature's website:

www.capitol.hawaii.gov

2. At the homepage, click onto the link "Status & Documents".

3. On the top right-hand side of the screen, you will find a box titled "2002 Regular Session Hearing Notices".

4. Click on the link titled "Do a more detailed search", located under the two buttons called "Get current hearing notices" and "Get today's hearing notices".

5. Once there, scroll down the screen until you get to "View hearing notices for a single bill or resolution":

☐ View hearing notices for a single bill or resolution:

Enter the bill number (up to 4 digits):

This is a:

- ☐ House bill
- ☐ House resolution
- ☐ Senate bill
- ☐ Senate resolution

6. Click on the button labeled "View hearing notices.....".

7. Click on the button that indicates your measure type (i.e. House Bill, Senate Bill, Senate Resolution, House Resolution).

8. Enter the four digit bill # into the box.

9. Press enter or scroll down to the bottom of the screen and press the button "Submit hearing notice request".

10. If a hearing has been scheduled, you will be able to click onto the hearing date to view the hearing notice.

WORKSHOPS February 19 - March 22

WORKSHOP	DESCRIPTION	DATES	TIME
The Legislative Process & Citizen Participation	Learn more about how the legislature works, the committee structure, terminology, calendaring, & how you can interact to affect outcomes. For those new to the Leg. & those wanting a refresher on the process.	Tue., March 5 Fri., March 8 Fri., March 15	5:00 pm Noon Noon
Presenting Effective Testimony	Learn how to present effective written & oral testimony that best communicates your position to the legislators.	Tue., March 12 Tue., March 19	Noon Noon
Reading Legislative Documents	Be able to use and understand many of the forms, documents, and records the Legislature uses in its work.	Fri., Mar. 1	Noon
Useful Internet Sites	Bills, resolutions, hearing notices, biographies, maps, HRS, & MORE are available over the Internet. Learn to navigate your way around several useful Internet sites.	Tue., March 5 Fri., March 22	Noon Noon

Please be sure to sign up for a workshop by giving the Public Access Room a call at 587-0478. If you can't get to the Capitol on the dates and times listed above, call us to arrange a personal workshop for you or your group. The Public Access Room provides the workshop series as a public service and can even handle requests to visit groups, community organizations and civic clubs across the state. Call for details.



Shane Peters talks as people start to roll their eyes

Answers:

